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/The locus of political power and authority appears to be the kusiut society. For information on this secret society, its disciplining of members, and its relations with the uninitiated see category 116, pp. 1-266./

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seldom a chief who had given many potlatches. Successful raiders rarely slew such an one; his position placed him above the dangers to which lesser men were subject.

Raids appear never to have been carried out solely for the purpose of giving warriors opportunities to display their prowess, or of permitting young men to prove their mettle. Scarcity of food was the commonest cause for forays when, of course, the victims were chosen for their accumulated supplies. The Kwakiutl especially, lacking abundance of salmon, often attacked the Bella Coola. Even more dreaded were the Kitkatla, the most warlike people of the central coast, who used to raid for many miles to carry off slaves whom they sold or traded for other commodities. Trespassing, too, was a source of friction which often led to hostility. In such a case, the offenders were usually held up to ridicule at potlatches, and the irritation gradually increased until wiped out in bloodshed. Members of a tribe which had suffered from a raid prompted by any of these motives would await a suitable opportunity for retaliation; this in turn would be avenged, and a vendetta often ensued lasting for generations. As already described, a ceremonial error brought punishment from a neighbouring tribe; this was the only motive which caused fighting between different Bella Coola villages. In the last century there was a struggle of this kind between the people of *Stuux* and *Ălqălăxł* in which the former were victorious and took many slaves who were later ransomed. When ill-luck had dogged a village or a group of villages for some time, the inhabitants sometimes endeavoured to wipe out their misfortunes by attacking another tribe.

The teeming salmon at Bella Coola, Kimsquit, and *Tăl·io*, made it unnecessary for the Bella Coola to wage aggressive war for which they were unfitted both on account of their unmilitary attitude and their lack of central authority. On the other hand, they were tempting victims for more belligerent neighbours. The narrow Bella Coola valley, however, far removed from the open sea, and densely populated, was difficult to attack.

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721 to attack. It is said that the Fort Rupert people once raided
648 it, but their hair became entangled in the thorns growing near the tide-flats and they were easily slain while struggling to free themselves. Two warriors escaped and hid in the branches
[727] of a huge spruce tree. They used to slip down at night and steal food, thus supporting themselves for several weeks, but
[628] were at last discovered and enslaved. On such occasions the villages of the lower and central valley usually rallied to the help of *Q̓omqo·ts*, the most exposed one, although there was no mechanism to enforce such assistance. The inhabitants of
[776] this town attributed their protection to *Ałquntäm*, and used to claim that he had decreed that they should be immune
[361] owing to their close association with him. Though Bella Coola
[162] itself was comparatively free from molestation, Kimsquit and *Täl·io*, with smaller populations and less strategic positions, were subject to frequent attacks. At least one of the villages at
712 the head of South Bentinck Arm was defended with a stockade of cedar trunks, set upright in a double row and entered by a water-gate with a drop-door.[1] This water-gate protected the
[648] residents on many occasions, and it is remembered that one
[726] Fort Rupert raiding-party was annihilated while endeavouring to batter down the door with a huge ram. The defenders, armed with muskets, picked off the attackers as they struggled in the open.

721 All the older men were emphatic in stating that most of their raids were in revenge for such attacks. Although such statements were partisan, they were confirmed in every way
[642] and were probably tolerably correct. Lack of a strong government was a serious handicap to the Bella Coola. After being
[623] assailed, the members of the town would discuss retaliation, and if unanimity of opinion was reached, that course was de-
[622] cided upon. Public opinion alone selected the leader, usually
[701] a man who had given a number of potlatches, especially one whose position had been made stronger by previous validation

[1] It is said that such stockades surrounded other villages, but definite information on this point was unavailable.

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as a warrior. Such a chief had no command over his followers. 721
If he were a man of great prestige, many would be willing to 701
serve under him, but he could not compel the services of any- 622
one except his own slaves. A few individuals often declined to [626]
follow their fellows to war, although the force of public opinion [628]
usually prevented a too individualistic course. Inhabitants of
other towns used their own discretion whether or not to join
the party. If some of their relatives had been slain in the
previous attack, revenge influenced them to share in the retali-
ation, otherwise only the prestige of a mighty chief could
attract them. No case is known in which all the Bella Coola [642]
villages joined in a single expedition; there were often tem- [628]
porary alliances between neighbouring settlements, but com-
plete lack of central organization. The course of events was
similar when a chief wished to raid without the motive of
avenging an attack. For example, if a Bella Coola had been [648]
enslaved by a foreign tribe and slain by his owner, a brother
of the victim might decide on revenge. The usual course was
to kill a slave belonging to the murderers, though sometimes
he led a raiding party if he could gain the necessary support.

Each warrior provided his own weapons, frequently the 726
same as those used for hunting. Bows with obsidian-tipped 411
arrows were most relied upon for offence, though slings were
also used from canoes. Every man carried a spear, pointed
like an arrow, for hand-to-hand fighting, although there was
relatively little of this, most of the combats being fought at a
distance with much noise, boasting, and expletives, but few
casualties. Spears were, however, useful if the attackers suc-
ceeded in surprising a village at night. Hostilities are a thing
of the past, consequently it was impossible to obtain detailed
information respecting offensive weapons. Armour consisted 714
of maple or birch slats reinforced with moosehide and worn 726
around the body and chest; this rendered quick movement
difficult but was effective against arrows. Muskets were intro- [411]
duced many years ago and armour consequently became use- [177]
less. Large shields of moosehide were carried in all canoes,

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714 and one was held up by the bow paddler as the craft neared the
726 shore to protect him and those behind from arrows and stones cast by slings. When not in use, shields were laid away in boxes with some white substance resembling flour.[3] On the
[103] shore of the fiord below Bella Coola, opposite Winter Bay, there are some boulders of the same white tint; even now these are often spoken of as "The Shields of the Bella Coola." It is said that hostile raiders, seeing them, used to remark that they had reached the outposts of Bella Coola.

726 The same lack of leadership shown during preparations for
701 a war was evident during hostilities. The so-called leader had
703 little authority over his men, who could desert and return home at any time. Lack of martial ability among their own chiefs
[648] sometimes led the Bella Coola to place themselves under the
[642] authority of a Bella Bella in a way which would be impossible for a war-like people. Frequently such divided leadership led to disaster, and is the surest proof that the Bella Coola were not as aggressive or bellicose as other coastal tribes.

726 Except when attacking the Carriers, all raiding parties
[533] embarked in canoes and followed a definite order of procedure
[703] handed down from the past. In the stern of each craft sat the captain, a chief, who, as the craft was leaving, began to sing his *xe·tla* song, keeping time to it with the beats of his paddle; the recounting of the glories of their ancestors was supposed to encourage the warriors. Instead of leaving simultaneously, a rendezvous was often chosen down the fiord, and the expedition finally moved off from there when all the canoes had arrived. While still in friendly territory, a flotilla proceeded
726 openly. A small amount of dried salmon and water was car-
789 ried by a war party and morsels of the former were eaten at intervals. The bow-man took as much food and drink as he thought could be consumed at one sitting, put a fragment of dried salmon in his mouth, chewed it four times on the same side of his mouth as he was paddling, and swallowed it. Then

[3] Some undetermined substance said to have had protective or preservative qualities.